

for I am wery of him for to telle,
five yeer his wyf and he togeder dwelle,
Til on a day she gan so sore longe
To seen her suster, that she saw nat longe,
That for desyr she niste what to seye.
But to her husband gan she for to preye,
for Goddes love, that she moste ones goon
her suster for to seen, and come anon,
Or elles, but she moste to her wende,
She preyde him, that he wolde after her sende;
And this was, day by day, al her prayere
With al humblesse of wyfhood, word, and chere.

THIS Cereus let make his shippes yare,
And into Grece himself is forth yfare
Unto his fader in lawe, and gan him preye
To vouchesauf that, for a month or tweye,
That Philomene, his wyves suster, mighte
On Progne his wyf but ones have a sighte,
And she shal come to yow again anon.
Myself with her wol bothe come and goon,
And as myn hertes lyf I wol her kepe.

THIS olde Pandion, this king, gan wepe
for tendernesse of herte, for to leve
his doghter goon, and for to yive her leve;
Of al this world he lovede nothing so;
But at the laste leve hath she to go,
for Philomene, with salte teres eke,
Gan of her fader grace to beseke
To seen her suster, that her longeth so;
And him embraceth with her armes two,
And therewithal so yong and fair was she
That, whan that Cereus saw her beautee,
And of array that ther was noon her liche,
And yit of bountee was she two so riche,
He caste his fryr herte upon her so
That he wol have her, how so that hit go,
And with his wyles kneled and so preyde,
Til at the laste Pandion thus seyde:

NOW, sone, quod he, that art to me so dere,
I thee betake my yonge doghter here,
That bereth the key of al my hertes lyf.
And grete wel my doghter and thy wyf,
And yive her leve somtyme for to pleye,
That she may seen me ones er I deye.

And soothly, he hath mad him riche feste,
And to his folk, the moste and eek the leste,
That with him com; and yaf him yiftes grete,
And him conveyeth through the maister strete
Of Athenes, and to the see him broghte,
And turneth boon; no malice he ne thoghte.

THES oves pulleth forth the vessel faste,
And into Trace arriveth at the laste,
And up into a forest he her ledde,
And to a cave privily him spedde;
And, in this derke cave, yif her leste,
Or leste noght, he bad her for to reste;
Of whiche her herte agroos, and seyde thus:
Wher is my suster, brother Cereus?

And therewithal she wepte tenderly,
And quook for fere, pale and pitously,
Right as the lamb that of the wolf is biten;
Or as the colver, that of the egle is smiten,
And is out of his clawes forth escaped,

Yet hit is sore afered and awhaped
Lest hit be hent eftsones, so sat she.
But utterly hit may non other be.
By force hath he, this traitour, doon that dede,
That he hath reft her of her maydenhede,
Maugree her heed, by strengthe and by his might.
Lo! here a dede of men, and that a right!
She cryeth Suster! with ful loude stevene,
And fader dere! and Help me, God in hevene!

Al helpeth nat; and yet this false theef
hath doon this lady yet a more mischeef,
for fere lest she sholde his shame crye,
And doon him openly a vilanye,
And with his sward her tong of kerveth he,
And in a castel made her for to be
ful privily in prison evermore,
And kepte her to his usage and his store,
So that she mighte him nevermore asterte.
O sely Philomene! wo is thy nerte;
God wreke thee, and sende thee thy bone!
Now is hit tyme I make an ende sone.

THIS Cereus is to his wyf ycome,
And in his armes hath his wyf ynome,
And pitously he weep, and shook his heed,
And swor her that he fond her suster deed;
for which this sely Progne hath swich wo,
That ny her sorweful herte brak atwo;
And thus in teres lete I Progne dwelle,
And of her suster forth I wol yow telle.

THIS woful lady lerned had in youthe
So that she werken & embrouden couthe,
And weven in her stole the radevore
As hit of women hath be woned yore.

And, shortly for to seyn, she hath her fille
Of mete and drink, and clothing at her wille,
And coude eek rede, and wel ynogh endyte,
But with a penne coude she nat wryte;
But lettres can she weven to and fro,
So that, by that the yeer was al ago,
She had ywoven in a stamin large
How she was broght from Athenes in a barge,
And in a cave how that she was broght;
And al the thing that Cereus hath wrought,
She waf hit wel, and wroot the story above,
How she was served for her suster love;
And to a knave a ring she yaf anon,
And prayed him, by signes, for to goon
Unto the quene, and beren her that clooth,
And than by signes swor him many an ooth,
She sholde him yewe what she geten mighte.

THIS knave anon unto the quene him
dighte,

And took hit her, and al the maner tolde,
And, whan that Progne hath this thing behelde,
No word she spak, for sorwe and eek for rage;
But feyned her to goon on pilgrimage
To Bachus temple; and, in a litel stounde,
Her dombe suster sitting hath she founde,
Weeping in the castel her aloon.
Alas! the wo, the compleint, and the moon
That Progne upon her dombe suster maketh!
In armes everich of hem other taketh,
And thus I lete hem in hir sorwe dwelle.

THE remenant is no charge for to telle,
for this is al & som, thus was she served,
That never harm agilte ne deserved
Unto this cruel man, that she of wiste.
Ye may be war of men, yif that yow liste.
For, al be that he wol nat, for his shame,

INCIPIT LEGENDA PHILLIS.



Doon so as Cereus, to lese his name,
Ne serve yow as a mordroun or a knave,
ful litel whyle shul ye trewe him have,
That wol I seyn, al were he now my brother,
But hit so be that he may have non other.

Explicit Legenda Philomene.

That wikked fruit cometh of a wikked tree,
That may ye finde, if that it lyketh yow.
But for this ende I speke this as now,
To telle you of false Demophon.
In love a falser herde I never non,
But if hit were his fader Theseus.
God, for his grace, fro swich oon kepe us!
Thus may thise women prayen that hit here,
Now to the effect turne I of my matere.

DESTROYED is of Troye the citee;
This Demophon com sailing in the see
Toward Athenes, to his paleys large;
With him com many a ship and many a barge
ful of his folk, of which ful many oon
Is wounded sore, and seek, and wo begoon.
And they han at the sege longe ylain.
Behinde him com a wind and eek a rain
That shoof so sore, his sail ne mighte stonde,
Him were lever than al the world alonde,

PREVE AS WEL AS BY FACTORITEE.